AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Relations between India and Bangladesh cover diverse areas and agreements to strengthen bilateral ties have been signed between the two countries in the areas of, *inter alia,* trade, river water sharing, land boundary, inland water transit, road and rail transport, visa, agriculture and cultural and educational exchanges. A bus service between Kolkata and Dhaka commenced in 1999 and the Agartala-Dhaka bus service was inaugurated in September this year.

(b) and (c) The bus services have been affected by the imposition by Bangladesh of a tax on foreign travel by land. The Government of Bangladesh has been requested to withdraw the tax.

Pakistani efforts to Mobilize support on Kashmir

1015. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has constituted a 26 Member Committee of Parliamentarians to mobilize world opinion in favour of their stand on Kashmir;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government not only to contain evil designs of Pakistan but also garner support for independence of PoK; and

(c) what preparations are under way?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Government are aware of various measures taken by Pakistan to project an inaccurate picture of the Jammu and Kashmir issue.

(b) and (c) It has been the consistent and principled stand of the Government that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, and Pakistan is in illegal and forcible occupation of a part of the State. The issue that remains to be resolved in Jammu and Kashmir is the vacation by Pakistan of the area under its illegal occupation. India remains committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan bilaterally and peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.